

[1928]

MCKERN, A WINNEBAGO WAR BUNDLE CEREMONY

153

I permit him to forget his bargain when the squash was served later in the day. 574 114

Big Wave did not participate in the feast, nor did he smoke ceremoniously or otherwise during the entire performance. During the feast he sang several songs without drum. These were his war-bundle songs, obtained in a dream by the original owner of the bundle and descending to his successors. 796 574

The bones from the feast were gathered up by the waiters and placed in a single vessel. Tobacco was added to the bones, and the vessel taken out to a place where no people were in view and where no dogs could molest the contents. This was a sacrifice to Disease Giver. [792]

After the meat had been entirely consumed, the leader announced that they would now have night spirit dancing. An old bow and four arrows were brought out and planted in the floor to stand erect in a row just west of the fireplace, where the war-bundle had formerly been displayed. Big Wave appointed one to lead the dance. The dancers aligned themselves in single file on the south side of the lodge, facing west, and were led by the dance leader carrying the bow and arrows and blowing a reed whistle, followed by the other dancers. The singers began singing and the dancers circled several times about the lodge counter-clockwise. With short pauses between, several songs and dances were so executed. When the set of songs was finished, the bowl of tobacco dedicated to the use of the guests was then given by one of the waiters to the most honored guest. The head waiter lifted the stove shovel containing the remains of the burned cedar leaves and poured the contents in the fire. Then the singing was resumed and they danced once more about the fire, joyously. 796 [574]

When the singing stopped, the leader for this dance returned the whistle to Big Wave, and the latter, as soon as all were again seated, addressed his guests. He said that this was the way they worshipped the spirits of their fathers. He thanked those participating for their assistance in the singing and dancing and solicited their further help. So they should enjoy health, long life and success. Everyone responded with a series of confirmative "O's". The feast of boiled squash was now served. It was the duty of the waiters to eat any scraps left by the feasters, since food uneaten is considered an affront to the spirits to whom the food is dedicated. [201] [261]

The ceremonies described above were followed by a buffalo dance. It seems that the spirit of the buffalo was especially noted for his speed in running, and could imbue his devotees with his skill. Inasmuch as speed in running was of prime importance in primitive warfare, where the desired procedure was to come quickly upon the enemy, strike decisively and disappear from the scene, the buffalo dance is considered an altogether proper adjunct to the war-bundle ceremony, and regularly follows in. [825] 726 535

Crashing Thunder

*159 Thus I acted up to the time that I have memory of things.

*159 In those days there were not many white people
221 living near us as to-day. My father went out hunt-
[224] ing continually. The lodge in which we lived was cov-
[342] ered with rush mattings, with reed mattings spread over
[352] the floor. After hunting for some time in one place we
would move to another. My father, mother, older sis-
ters, and older brothers, all carried the packs. Thus
we would spend our time until the spring of the year
and then in the spring we would again move in order
[224] to live near some stream where father could hunt
[136] muskrats, mink, otter, and beaver.

In the summer we always returned to Black River
Falls, Wisconsin. Here all the Indians gathered after
[222] they had given their feasts. Then we picked berries.

*159 When picking berries my father used to buy me gum
so that I should not be able to eat any of the berries.

● [261] I managed however to eat berries and chew gum at the
same time. After a while I learned to chew tobacco
and then I did not eat the berries while picking them.

[276] Later on I got to like tobacco very much and I
probably used up more money in buying tobacco than
would have been the value of the berries had I eaten
them.

[187] ing and crying to await the coming of the spirit. Among the Winne-
[593] bago, and probably among many other tribes, it was customary
[603] for the parents or grandparents, to prepare the children specifically
for what was likely to happen; to inform them how to recognise
the approach of the spirit and, what was more to the point, to teach
them how to distinguish a good from a bad spirit.

[2].

¹ [i.e., during their quest for a guardian spirit,
see P.1, Category 116 -- Analyst]

Reminiscences of Childhood

We were three boys of whom I was the youngest and at night we slept together. In cold weather we fought as to who was to sleep in the middle, since whoever got that place was warm; for while those at either end used to pull the cover from each other, the one in the middle was always covered. Even after I grew up I always took the cover away from the particular person with whom I happened to be sleeping. I would always fold it under me, for it had become a habit with me to take the cover away from the other person whenever I slept on the outside.

We always ate out of one dish. At times we did not have enough food on hand and then I would always try to get enough by eating very fast. In this way I often succeeded in depriving the others of their proper portion. Sometimes, on the other hand, I would purposely eat slowly and then when the others were finished, I would say that I had not been given enough and so get some of their food. In this way I developed a habit, that I still have, of eating fast. Even after I grew up, whenever I ate with other people, I always finished sooner than they did.

Another habit acquired then was the ability to go without food for a whole day while traveling. I did not mind this in the least, for during my fasting I had grown accustomed to going without food for long periods of time.

In the summer, at the season when people pick berries, I used to go around visting, sometimes for a day, sometimes for a longer period. I would often receive